

**STATE SENATOR • MICKEY SWITALSKI • 10TH DISTRICT**

# Switalski Press Release



P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-7315 • Fax: 517-373-3126  
E-mail: [senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov) • [www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/SD10](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/SD10)

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**CONTACT: STATE SENATOR SWITALSKI  
PHONE: (517) 373-7315**

## **Switalski Aims to Improve Campaign Laws**

*Switalski's bills to increase public accessibility, toughen penalties on cheats*

**(Lansing)-** State Senator Michael Switalski (D-Roseville) introduced two bills last week that would strengthen Michigan's campaign finance laws and provide more accountability of political campaigns to the public.

"Improvement in Michigan's campaign finance law is sorely needed because the current law is not working," said Switalski. "The current penalties in place are ineffective and do not serve as a deterrent to those who refuse to file a campaign finance report. In this situation often times paying the small fine is the small price of doing business in a secretive and undemocratic way."

Senate Bill 31 would increase the penalty for failing to file a campaign finance report from \$1,000 to \$5,000. In addition, Senate Bill 84 would require that campaign finance reports from candidates running in local elections be available on-line for public viewing. For example, Macomb County currently posts campaign finance information for local offices on its website. Senate Bill 84 would standardize the practice statewide and post the information for public viewing on the Secretary of State's website.

"Political contributions are a necessary element to running a campaign," said Switalski. "The courts have ruled that campaign contributions are a form of freedom of speech. It is here to stay. However, the public still has the right to know who contributes to a campaign and how much and to see how it plays out in policy. This legislation is a significant step in increasing citizen awareness and further improving the fundamental right of openness when it comes to campaign contributions."

The bills are currently in the Senate Government Operations Committee where they await further consideration.

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